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SNAPSHOTS AND SOUNDBITES

by

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Vienna, Austria (1922 - 1938)

I Saw the Face of God

Once, when I was a child and looked up into the sky from our balcony, I saw God's face. It was in profile, the right side turned toward me, with white hair and a short cropped white beard. His whole head was imbedded in a white cloud.

I told my father and my mother that I had seen God. Each one of them said that was impossible (implying, I believe, that there was no such thing.) But I knew better.

We Have Lost Our Parents !

We were about four years old, my cousin and I, and my sister was two . We were staying in a hotel room in the country . Something woke us at what seemed the middle of the night . The three of us were alone in the room and called out for our parents. No one came . We started to panic , ran to the window and screamed : " We have lost our parents !" (The parents were sitting in the garden , engaged in a post prandial chat , never realizing the anxiety their absence had caused in us .)

The Motor Cycle

When I was a little girl I loved motor cycles : to ride on them or even just to sit on them. Once, when we were vacationing somewhere in Lower Austria, I saw a motorcycle leaning against a wall . Naturally I had to climb onto it . Unfortunately it was not secured very well and ,as a result, fell on top of me .

I don't remember any injury or pain . What I do remember is the frightened face of an old woman and my terror of it.

The Black Nightgown

Every so often when I was "bad" , or perhaps too much for my mother to handle, she shipped me off to my paternal grandmother . Once ,when I was there, she and her second husband had visitors: an older woman and her grown son.

At night the older woman was supposed to share the double bed with my grandmother and I was to sleep between them . The lady wore a black nightgown, however , or perhaps it was a slip. In any case I was absolutely terrified of it and sought and found shelter in the bed of her son .

My Sister's and My Game

When we were little girls we were expected to straighten out our room in the evening before we went to sleep . Although we did not like to do this , we managed it in the following way : we stood at one end of the room and alternated in giving orders to the other one for each task , like a military commander to a soldier . It worked like a charm .

My Grandfather's Death

I was about seven years old and in bed recovering from an abscess on my tonsil that had been incised. There was a phone call. My mother picked it up. It was from her sister in Romania. During the few minutes it took to establish the connection, I knew that my mother's father who had recently gone to visit my aunt and her family, had died . I was right. And I reproached myself for months to come that, had I not made that assumption, he would still be alive.

My Mother's Trip to Romania

My mother and my sister, who did not yet go to school, took the train to Romania. I had to stay behind. My father and I accompanied them to the station. I was terrified that I would cry and that my father would then disapprove of me .

I shall not Bow to You

All through elementary school we had religion class once a week .The teacher would sit on top of his desk and tell us stories from the Old Testament . At one time , around Purim, he talked to us about Esther and her uncle Mordechai and how Mordechai ignored the request of Haman that he bow to him.

That night I had a dream that I refused to bow to the person who requested it of me . That person , whoever that was , tried to make me do so by force , which was very painful , since I kept resisting. I woke up with severe pain in the right side of my belly. The next morning I was hospitalized with appendicitis.

My Mother's Threat

When I misbehaved my mother would say : "I shall die and you will be sorry !" She did and I was .

My Father and Mother Making Love

Once again we were in the country. My father had come to visit for the weekend . The four of us slept in the same room . I woke up during the middle of the night because my parents' bed was creaking. I knew what that meant. I was furious at both of them : at him for condescending to my mother's needs , but even more at my mother . Why did she have to lower herself and beg favors from this philandering man ? The next day I neither looked at nor talked to her .

My Mother and my Sister

We were in the country . My mother, my sister and I were sleeping in the same room. My sister had wanted to visit with some friends. My mother called her names and suggested she go away altogether. I started to cry, loudly and uncontrollably. When she asked me what was the matter I could not answer, but cried only harder and louder, inconsolably.

The Trees That Were in Love With One Another .

We were staying at a hotel in the country with our mother . She spent a lot of time sitting on the porch and conversing with a man of approximately her age. I was into writing at that time and had just finished what I thought was a lovely vignette of two tall trees on opposite sides of a street bending their crowns toward each other and whispering in the wind how much they were in love. I proudly showed what I had written to the man . He gave it back to me with a disgusted look on his face : "Trees don't fall in love with each other ! This is unreal and does not make any sense.!" My mother, waving her hand toward me , indicated that they did not want to be disturbed again.

My First Bra.

My mother and her second youngest brother were whispering and joking in the room in our apartment in which he had his ladies' underwear business. Then, without looking at me, my mother handed me a bra and told me to try it on.

Go Away

My mother stood frequently with her back to the tiled stove in our living room. I knew she was in constant pain. But she had not gone to see her doctor , nor had she made any effort to seek a specialist . I wanted to be close to her , partly to reassure her ,partly to seek reassurance from her for myself. "Go away," she grumbled as she pushed me back .

My Initiation Into Womanhood

Several years previously my father had given me a book that explained everything you wanted to know about physical development and sexuality, conception and childbirth. So, when, rather early in my teens, I found some stains in my underwear I knew pretty much what that meant. I went and told my mother. Her response was, "Are you menstruating, God forbid?", and she went and brought me a big pad.

The Fat Girl .

It was Parent Day at the All Girls preparatory high school ("Gymnasium") . My father was willing to attend under the condition that I would go with him and stand in one line while he waited in the other . Since I wanted him to meet my teachers I had little choice but to consent. I don't remember what he said they told him about me .I knew that ,basically, I was doing alright. I do remember, though, his grinning at me as we left and telling me that one of the mothers in his line had asked him whether that fat girl in the other line was his daughter .

Ever since when he was in good humor and particularly affectionate he used this description of me as a way of saying hello.

The Fascist "Putsch"

It was the middle of the afternoon. We heard it on the radio: the Christian Socialist Party had taken over Vienna. The parliamentary government was dead. The Christian Socialists had annexed the large public housing complex, Karl Marx Hof, which was administered by the social democratic government and in which my beloved teacher lived with her family. My father was out. My sister and I were at home with our mother. There was an eerie quiet outside. I was worried about what would happen to my teacher and wished I could find a way to rescue her. My mother insisted that we take a bath and go to bed.

Mimosas

My father took my sister and me to visit our mother who was staying at a hospital on the outskirts of Vienna following a kidney operation. My father carried a bouquet of flowers for her. "Are these mimosas ?", I asked. " Yes", he said, " as the name implies."

Some of my Parents' Jokes and Sayings

My mother : "You can't dance with one rear end at two weddings."

(In response to "if only" statements:) "If only my grandmother had wheels on her belly she would be a bus ."

"Don't make yourself so small, you are not so big!"

" What one does not have in one's head one has to have in one's feet ."

"Your eyes are bigger than your stomach !"

My father: " Shortly after the Russian revolution a man said proudly that he was working a lot of overtime at his factory. 'How come?' he was asked. He said that they were making signs that were in extremely high demand. 'What signs?' he was asked. ' Elevator out of order' , he said . "

" Even the best man cannot live in peace if his bad neighbor does not want it. "

Don Carlos

I was thirteen years old at that time and she was eighteen . We were both students at the same girls' school . She was an aspiring actress. To celebrate her graduation and also my birthday we went to the "Old Danube ", rented a row boat and anchored at a quiet spot far out on the river with no one around. And we started to read aloud, the parts divided: Schiller's play **Don Carlos** . I was and became the passionate young prince and she incarnated all the other personalities. Ordinary time stood still until dusk settled in and we had to return to the city .

This afternoon was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.

I' m Not Dead Yet

My father was entertaining some friends in the living room which was also my mother's bedroom. She spent the day resting in his adjoining , much smaller room. It seems the maid had served my father and his guests afternoon coffee but had brought nothing to her. Suddenly my mother stormed into the kitchen and demanded her " Jause". "I am not dead yet !", she screamed.

My Grandfather's Pallor

My mother was hospitalized because of the ongoing pain in her abdomen. It was fairly late in the evening. My sister and I and the live in maid were at home. At one point the front door opened and my grandfather who also lived with us came in. He was a most handsome man with white hair and bronze skin who carried himself impeccably.

On that afternoon he had visited my mother and also talked with her doctor. I went into the corridor to meet him and ask him for news. I don't remember what he said , but I shall never forget the color of his face : it was chalk white.

Sitting Through Lohengrin

My mother was home after having stayed for several weeks in the "General Hospital". On the following day she was supposed to enter a private sanitarium with better medical specialists, for which her sister's family would pay.

I had a ticket to Wagner's Lohengrin for that night. I really did not want to go and would much rather have spent the time with her. Staying home would emphasize my concern for her, however, which, I knew, I was not to show. Besides she wanted me to go and tell her about the performance, for Lohengrin was one of the few Wagner operas she liked.

And so I went and counted the minutes from beginning to end .

The Night my Mother Died

My sister and I were lying in our respective beds which were arranged rectangularly to each other . We were both awake. We held hands. Neither of us spoke a word. That night our father was home rather than staying at the place of Catherine, who in the future was to become our stepmother .

We both listened to his pacing up and down in our mother's room , for hours and hours . Then, around four in the morning, the phone rang. My father picked it up, listened and hung up. He continued pacing through the rest of the night.

After the sun came up he came into our room and said:" Your mother died . He stomach broke through. She asked whether she was going to die and was told no. Then she asked for something to eat. She never knew she was dying."

After My Mother's Funeral

I had been "brave" at the funeral and did not shed one tear. Afterwards we went to my cousin's apartment for a light meal. We all sat around their table: my cousin, her parents (her mother had been my mother's best friend), my father, my grandfather, my sister and I. I thought to myself: why could not her mother have died instead of mine?

And, a few days later, after I had returned to school, I was eager to get home from class because I knew that a sympathy card from a much revered teacher was waiting for me.

Needless to say that I felt guilty about both of the above.

Sign Language

A few months after my mother's death my sister was hospitalized with diphtheria. Visitors were not allowed inside the hospital. The only way we were allowed to communicate with each other was through windows that had to remain closed. Our father and I stood outside and my sister looked out of the second floor window. It occurred to us, simultaneously, that we could use sign language. And we did. It was fun! Our poor father was left out and envied us.

The Night the Nazis Took Vienna

A young man with a very pronounced "Jewish " nose and I went to the Vienna State Opera to hear Eugene Onegin. During the break before the last act something compelled us to look out at the Ringstrasse. Was it the noise? The singing? The marching? Other people looking out? I can't remember. What I do remember is rows and rows of goose-stepping and singing uniformed SA men marching down the Ring and the crowds on both sides of the street howling their welcome at them. It was a living nightmare. What were we going to do ?

To this day I don't recall how we were able to cross the Ringstrasse and how he was able to bring first me and then himself to our respective homes.

It has taken more than 50 years till I finally went to see Eugene Onegin in its entirety. I could not help but see once again that the last act was not worth taking the risk of having stayed till the end during that fateful March night.

My Father's Escape from the Nazis

It was in summer of 1938. My father, my future stepmother Catherine ,my sister and I were walking on the Ringstrasse , near the Parliament. Suddenly two SA men came up from behind my father, asked for his identification and, one on each side of him, commanded him to come along.

It was as if the bottom dropped out from under me: What was going to happen to all of us now? In a trance Catherine, my sister and I walked toward the tram stop a few blocks away and boarded the train that was about to leave. Lo and behold, while it was already in full speed, my father jumped in. He had simply run away from his captors!

It was time to leave Austria.

Bug Spray

We were almost ready to leave the country. People came to buy the furniture. Given that there were bedbugs in the building and in the apartment, I used strong spray to eliminate them. It also eliminated much of the veneer on the furniture pieces and we had to sell them at a much lower fee.

On the Train to Paris

We had German passports with a visa to Nigeria and a visa "sans arret" (without stopping) to France. At the French border the official who examined our passports said that with this kind of visa we were not allowed to enter France; we would have to get off the train right then and there. My father stated loud and clear that he refused to get off the train. There was a prolonged silence. Then the official returned the passport to my father and got off the train. The doors closed and the train resumed its journey .

France (1938 - 1939)

The Movies in Paris

While we were in Paris all three of us were marking time. And so we went to the movies a lot. One could see three shows after another for one entrance price and could learn French to boot in the process.

Once we watched a movie about Schubert. My father started to sob, uncontrollably. I was embarrassed by what I considered to be his weakness and acted as if I did not hear him.

Time Stood Still

There was nothing I had to do . There was nowhere I had to go . There were no obligations and there were no time constraints. My sister had a job as an *au pair*. Catherine was in the *Provence* taking care of her ailing parents who had emigrated there from Poland . My father was sitting either in our room or downstairs in the vestibule of our hotel, staring into space.

The hotel was located at an outskirt of Paris, at the edge of the *Bois de Boulogne*.. My father had insisted that he and I both stay in a room with only one large bed . Two rooms or even two beds would have been too expensive, he said. We each stayed at opposite edges of the bed. I did not sleep very well; neither did he .

In daytime I spent hours roaming through the park , walking the various trails , my eyes following the riders going by on their horses . But nothing left an impression on me , since my mind , my whole being was not in my body but back home.

Kristallnacht

It was dark where we sat and listened in silence to the radio's report on the *Kristallnacht*.. Although we were safe at the moment , we felt we were surrounded by doom which was coming closer and closer and would not leave us any way out.

I am Sixteen Years Old

During these long days by myself I explored the various districts of Paris , partly on foot , partly by bus or subway . Sometimes I would go to an open market that was not too far from our hotel . I would buy cheese and yard long French bread and bring it home. I would eat a bit of it, leave it on the table in our room and go out again.

My father became more and more angry with me. "You can't just come and go at will" he said , "I need to know where you are going and when you are planning to be back. After all, you are just a young girl and I am responsible for you !"

I told him in no uncertain terms : "I am sixteen years old and I can do as I please!" and left for another explorative walk .

"

The Nike of Samothrace

Sometimes I would go to the *Louvre*. . Near the entrance ,in a wide round space stood the enormous statue of the Nike of Samothrace. The illumination of her rotated from sunlight to moonlight . I stood, for long periods of time watching her in the changing atmosphere , taking in her strength , courage and leadership and hoping that I might be able to call on it some day .

The Bleak Riviera

Paris was too expensive, my father said . And so he and I moved to a hotel in Nice . It was December, the rainy season . The days were dark, cold and damp. Not at all what I had expected the Riviera to be. I walked by the ocean or explored the town . Nothing had changed, except the location.

The Teacher Who Walked With Me

My future stepmother arranged for my attendance at a boarding school which prepared one for the baccalaureate exam . The school was located in the country side not far from Nice.

One of the teachers, a little guy with dark hair and glasses introduced me to the world of philosophy. In the Socratic mode he lectured and asked questions as he and I walked along the trails surrounding the school. I loved every minute of it , for the world of ideas was the world which made me feel present and alive.

Good Bye in Marseilles

While I was at the Boarding School near Nice ,my future stepmother had made arrangements for me to serve for two years as an au pair girl in Damascus with a French couple and their daughter and son . I had to go up to Paris for a day to meet with the parents and apparently the encounter was successful, since I was told of our departure date and the time of boarding the boat .

My father and I met in Marseilles on the day prior to my departure and stayed together until it was time for me to board. He was hurting but unable to express in words what he felt . He had wanted me to spend more time with him than the one day , but I wanted to stay at the school with my mentor for as long as I could .

Once again, while my body was in the present, my mind, dreading the future clung to the recent past .

Damascus , Syria (1939 - 1940)

What to Say ?

One of my tasks as an au pair was to bathe the children. The little boy was about seven years old and the little girl three. As they were sitting in the tub, the boy had an erection. I was hoping he would not notice it but he did. He asked me what that was. I did not know what to say; so I excused myself and knocked at his parents' bedroom. There was no answer. I knew that Mr. B. was out of town on business; hence I felt there was no harm in opening the door a crack and asking the lady of the house for advice. But, behold, she was not alone in her bed but shared it with her friend, a dignified middle aged professional woman. I closed the door without asking my question. I still did not know what to say to the little boy.

The Maid's Cousin

The maid's cousin was a gentle man . On my days off he and I would bicycle into the hills surrounding Damascus and savor the wide open landscape with its rocks of pink, blue and yellow hues . He spoke a little French and taught me words in Arabic by pointing toward objects in front of us . He even taught me a few Aramaic words. He and my employer's maid came from a village in Lebanon where the language was still that of the original New Testament . I learned to repeat Christ's words "Why hast thou forsaken me ?" in Aramaic and remember them to this date.

I looked forward to these excursions. I savored the peace of the landscape and his kindness toward me. But this weekly respite did not last long. When I returned after one of these trips my employer, Mrs. B. took me aside and told me that this "was not done ". I was obliged to tell him. He understood and never spoke to me again.

The Trip to Aleppo

While his wife and kids had gone back to France ,Mr. B. and I took a trip to Aleppo, a town near the northern border of Syria. We were invited for dinner. There were at least 10 courses that were served. Each time Mr. B. refused what was offered to him I accepted , trying to make up for his lack of politeness.

On the way home ... Never before or again have I been as sick as on that trip.

The Heart has its Reasons

Mrs. B and the children had left for France . I was still at their household until new arrangements could be made for me. Mr. B. took a more than casual interest in me. He asked me to give him a good reason for my refusal. I gave him many "good reasons" but he argued each one down. Finally I had to admit that I had lost and had to give in. Only much later did I learn that "the heart has its reasons that reason does not know."

In Damascus

Mrs. B and her children had left for France because of the war. Mr. B and I were still there. And so was the maid, making the beds and cleaning up after us. After a few days she confronted me with a pointed dirty look. Both she and I knew what she meant.

Soon after that Mr. B informed me that the Surete did not want someone with a German passport in the household of a man who was doing intelligence work for the French government. He found me a place to stay for the time being: in the convent of the Soers of Besancon.

Burning letters

I was staying at a convent of French sisters in Damascus until further arrangements could be made about my life. Something moved me to burn the letters of my boyfriend from Vienna . I don't remember what it was . I do remember, though, that the Mother Superior became very upset about it when she found out . She was sure I was involved in some political coup and insisted I leave the convent at the earliest opportunity.

Pots, Yes; Meals with Family, No

Mr. B arranged that I stay with friends of theirs as an au pair for them . They were a larger family with several slightly older children and they entertained quite a bit. As I recall it , most of my time was spent in the kitchen , cooking and washing dishes , especially pots. (Ever since I have not cooked and have refused to wash a single pot.)

I recall also that when I served the first meal and was ready to sit down with the family at their table I was told in no uncertain terms that my place was in the kitchen and not with them . That was a new experience for me .

No more Operating Room

With the help of a woman who was influential at the Red Cross I was able to enroll in a practical nursing program while living and working in a small hospital which was owned and operated by a surgeon. One day I was allowed to assist at an operation, for the first time. Dr. S. asked me to get the catgut ready. Obediently I unwound the spool. The whole instrument tray was covered with twine. As I recall, someone took me by the arm and led me out of the room. Henceforth my assignment was to do inventory and to stay out of the doctor's way.

New Year's Eve in Damascus

I was seventeen and a half. The nurse I worked with and I were going to celebrate. We went out with two soldiers from the Foreign Legion. One of them spoke German. We had a wonderful time, drinking, smoking, talking, until the wee hours of the morning.

A few days later I was called in by the Surete. The officer sat me down and accused me of spying. I, with a German passport was trying to extract secrets from these French soldiers. I was dumbfounded. I cried. I tried to tell him I simply wanted to have a good time, the first time being away from home. He seemed a little mollified but insisted that at another time I could fall into evil hands. Therefore he decreed a curfew for me: I was not to leave home after dark for the duration of the war, or else I would be arrested as a spy!

Beirut, Lebanon (1940 - 1943)

Swearing that I am Not Jewish

I had my practical nursing diploma and was no longer a student . Hence I was no longer allowed to work. I would have been interned for the duration of the war if it had not been for my aunt's friend who happened to be the Medical Dean's assistant at the University of Beirut . Through him she was able to arrange that I become a student at their School of Nursing.

Since they had a *numerus clausus* at the University and since the Anschluss friendly French government would have caused me to be interned otherwise I had to swear that I was not Jewish. The school's principal did not believe me nor did she approve of me, but, given her position in the hierarchy of the university, there was nothing she could do.

The Morning Assembly

Every morning at seven o'clock all nursing students had to assemble in the dining room, wearing their uniforms. We stood in a large circle, listened to the principal's reading a section from the bible and sang a hymn together. After that we were allowed to eat breakfast .

Unfortunately I was often late to these meetings, having great trouble assembling my student uniform: the starched white cuffs and collar always turned out to be crooked after I tried to pin them on the dark blue uniform, and the cap never sat straight on my head. Whenever I entered the hall hurriedly and as unobtrusively as possible trying to find my place in the circle, I could feel the disapproving glance of the principal upon me.

Please, No Babies

I was terrified of working in pediatrics. The pain of babies and little children caused by their illness or the medical procedures they had to undergo without any choice on their part went all the way into me. And so did their experience of helplessness and of utter insult. All they could do was cry and scream. Their pain was so unbearable to me that I wanted to kill them just to make it all go away. I was as afraid of what I might do as I was of their pain.

I Had No Money

My aunt's friend who had returned to England before I arrived because of the political situation in Beirut did not only pay for my tuition and room and board at the School of Nursing but also supplied me with funds for extra expenses I might have. I spent her money as fast as I got it, mostly on sweets and movies, and frequently had to beg her for more.

I Did Not Belong

There were several subgroups among the students at the School of Nursing: Armenians, Christian Arabs, and Jewish Palestinians (There was no state of Israel as yet.) One student, a Bahai refugee from Persia as well as I did not belong to any of these groups. We became close friends, which resulted, once again, in the disapproval of the principal. This, in turn caused the Persian student to withdraw from our friendship.

And so I spent many, many hours by myself at the medical library studying all kinds of diseases. And I also read novels, each consisting of several volumes, such as *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonte* .

Proving that I was Jewish

The time came when the Free French took over Beirut and suddenly, given I had a German passport, I had to prove my Jewishness , or else, once again, I would have been interned. But how does a girl prove that point? Jewish friends of mine who worked at the X ray department of the hospital and who often acted as my guardian angels ,were able to help: They knew an orthodox rabbi with whom I met. He never looked at me but gave me a Hebrew text to read. Although I could not translate it or even understand it I did remember the Hebrew letters from my religion classes as a child and could read the words aloud. This was taken as proof that I was Jewish and saved me from internment. Once again the principal disapproved and once again her hands were tied.

The Australian Soldiers with Dengue Fever

One morning I arrived on duty on the Internal Medicine ward for men. I could not believe my eyes : The ward was filled with tall, strapping men in short pink hospital gowns open at the back. Some were either lying on their beds, others walking around aimlessly . They all seemed to feel miserable.

It turned out that they were Australian soldiers who had been serving in North Africa and who had become infected with Dengue Fever which is like a bad Flu ,only worse. I had a hard time keeping a straight face when I looked at their gowns.

A Date at the School of Nursing in Beirut

It was covertly expected of the nursing students that they date the soldiers who were stationed near the American University. At a party given at the school I tried to meet my obligations, like the nurses of old, but my date turned out to be a man of Arab descent who resided in that area. Under the pretext that he wanted to show me something he persuaded me to go with him to his apartment. As soon as we arrived he started to make overtures, rather aggressively so. I told him I was not interested and did not want to. In that case, he said, he would shoot me. I said he should go ahead. I had no one in that country, and no one would know or care about what happened to me. He did not say a word, led me downstairs, gave me money and put me into a cab.

Leaving Beirut and my Boyfriend

Given my status as a Jewish refugee I was not allowed to stay and work in Beirut after my graduation from the School of Nursing. Besides, my mother's sister and her family who lived in Jerusalem wanted me to come and stay with them .

And so I said good bye to my boyfriend of that time , a gentle, if persistent German Jew who lived in Israel but was stationed in Beirut on Military business. I did not want to continue our relationship in Israel when he returned but rather chose to fix him up with my friend, the German Jewish nursing student. They got married, created a family and lived happily ever since.

Israel (1943 - 1952)

My Mother's Surgeon

I was doing private duty nursing at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. It turned out that my patient's surgeon was the one who had opened and closed my mother's abdomen in Vienna , without being able to do anything for her . I had been told that he was gentle with my mother and straightened out her blanket for her . Here in Jerusalem I knew who he was , but he did not know me .

Mr. B's Visit to Jerusalem

Mr. B came to visit me or, I should rather say, I visited him at his hotel in Jerusalem. I don't remember exactly what year it was but I do remember that the police were making rounds through the various hotels. These were strained times. I also remember that I had to spend much of the night hiding under the bed rather than lying in it.

Private Duty

I was doing private duty , nights, at a hospital in Jerusalem . It was the night nurse's job to give the patient a bed bath before her day relief arrived. My patient, who had had a restless night ,finally fell asleep. I waited as long as I could , but then , worried about the repercussions if I did not bathe her , woke her . She did not want to be bathed . Young as I was and fearful of the authorities, I insisted . She became agitated. I won.

When I returned in the evening to resume my duty, I noticed that the staff members looked at me with a strange expression in their eyes. When I inquired at the nursing station about my patient's day , I was told that she had died,

No Writing on Sabbath

I was working as a staff nurse in an orthodox hospital in Jerusalem. From Friday evening till Saturday evening we were not allowed to write anything down but had to remember our findings until the Sabbath had passed.

It was my job to measure fluid intake and output on all the patients on my unit. Although I knew the rules I did not trust my memory and hence covertly jotted down the names and numbers on a slip of paper I hid in the pocket of my uniform. The nursing supervisor caught me doing this, however, and fired me on the spot.

What Time Is It ?

I was in the nursing office at the psychiatric hospital where I worked . The telephone was on top of a filing cabinet near the door. One of our patients approached the office. He was a middle aged man with Alzheimers Disease,- which then meant premature senility - , completely naked except for a bow around his neck and a hat on his head . He asked what time it was , looked at the telephone dial , smiled , turned around and walked away .

An Aborted Suicide Attempt

I was subletting a large furnished room in a private home on Mount Carmel. It was within walking distance from the hospital where I worked. The windows were too high for me to be able to enjoy the beautiful view of the harbor. Also, the room was adjoining the quarters of the children of the family who owned the house. The children were young and rambunctious and their noise was painful to my ears and nerves. I kept begging the mother to have them tone down their voices but got only very defensive responses, letting me know in no uncertain terms that, after all, they were children and this was their home.

I was irritated and I was lonely. Except for colleagues whom I saw primarily at work I had no friends in Haifa. . For my days off I traveled to Tel Aviv where I stayed overnight with friends of my mother's so I could have several consecutive sessions with my Reichian Analyst.

But nothing much changed. My life was empty and I saw no way out. So, one day I decided I was going to put an end to it. The only method I could think of was to hang myself. I climbed on a chair, fixed one end of a rope to the lamp fixture at the ceiling and created a loop at the other. As I tested out what the rope would feel like around my neck, I suddenly thought of my father and sister. He was hiding with his future second wife in the stable of a farmer in the Pyrenees and my sister was staying with my uncle's family in Rhode Island. I realized I could not do "this" to either of them and proceeded to disconnect the rope from the ceiling. Just as I stepped down from the chair there was a knock at my door: a fellow nurse from the hospital who sometimes took care of my unwashed dishes wanted to know whether I was interested in going out with her for something to eat.

Hospitalized in Israel

I had been having consistent low grade fever and feeling miserable. So it was decided that I should go to the hospital and stay there , for tests. Several days passed . No one spoke to me. Finally I asked the doctor who made rounds that morning what the findings were . He answered : "Do you think you are such an interesting case?"

The Nurse Who Was Late

I was the night nurse at the psychiatric hospital in Petach Tiqua. I always came early to get the report, so that the evening staff could go home on time. I expected the same courtesy toward me from the day nurse in charge. But she was frequently late, excusing herself with the statement that she and her live in boy friend had had an argument during the night. This did not seem to be a good enough reason for me and I usually left considerably annoyed.

One morning I waited longer than ever before. I waited and waited, fuming inside. Finally I went to the nurse in charge. She called that nurse's apartment, but there was no response. I was excused and went home. When I arrived the next night I was told that her boyfriend had murdered her.

Air Raid in Petach Tiqua.

I was on night duty at the psychiatric hospital in Petch Tiqua. Just after daybreak the air raid alarm went off. I woke all the patients and we walked downstairs to the shelter . The physician on call who slept at the hospital was furious . Why had I not called him? There was no need to take the patients out of their beds. It had not occurred to me to call him. I had to save them, that was all.

The Latin German Dictionary

In Israel while I was studying for the London Matric , a friend of mine lent me his Latin German dictionary . Then he was called up for military duty and shortly thereafter he was killed at the front. Several months later his sister called me and asked me to return the dictionary , which she believed he had lent to me .. I told her I did not have it. It is still with me , the pages barely holding together . I have taken it along with every move I made . And every time I look something up in it , I wonder about my lie.

Air Raid in Tel Aviv

I was sitting at an outside table of a coffee house in Tel Aviv , reading and studying . The air raid alarm went off . Everyone ran to the shelter . I gathered my books and notes before I moved toward the shelter . First things first .

The Road to Jerusalem

I don't remember where in Israel I came from and why I wanted to go to Jerusalem . I do remember the journey on the bus, however : our ongoing ascent though bright sunlight illuminating a scenery interspersed by olive groves and sculpted by rocks in all shades of red , orange and blue . And then, as we got closer, the golden roofs of Jerusalem spread along the hills. Every cell in my body knew then what Holy City meant to Christians , Jews and Moslems alike .

The Trip to Tiberias

I wanted to visit Tiberias , the hot springs in that area and the Dead Sea. I traveled by bus , by myself. The bus driver played music on his radio. Was it Mahler ? Or Schubert? I can't remember . I do remember my experience of the bare landscape and its blue and pinkish red colors . And I remember being enveloped by both the visual and the auditory impressions I received and finding myself in a timeless state , floating between here and there .

And suddenly I knew : It was time to depart for the United States ! For years I had said no to my family who had emigrated there years before and who had begged me to join them so I could be with them and study medicine. I had always made excuses because of personal attachments from whom I could not separate . But just now in this enchanted state on the way to Tiberias something had shifted : it was time to leave!

It took more than a year to collect the necessary documents that would enable me to enter the United States: each time I obtained one ,another one ran out and had to be reapplied for . But I stuck to it and the day came when I found myself at the Tel Aviv Airport , accompanied by my friend . All I had in my possession was a duffel bag with items I had carried with me since I had left Vienna: a feather pillow, a small volume by Rilke and another one with sayings by the Buddha ; a few clothes and five Dollars , which was all the money that I was allowed to take out of the country.

Leaving Israel: The Longest Night I Have Known

The plane left the airport near Tel Aviv around three PM. My friend and I had said good bye. It was the end of an era for both of us .

The plane stopped over in Rome late in the afternoon. At two AM we arrived in London where a friend was meeting me in the waiting room so that we could chat during the holdover period. The next stop was to be Newfoundland. We were supposed to be there in the morning. For a long, long time it seemed as if tomorrow would never come. What if the sun simply would not rise?, I wondered. What if it remained night for ever?

Morning did come, eventually, and with it the Newfoundland airport. I stepped out of the plane into the snowy landscape; an experience I had not had for 14 years. And then there was the strange taste of the first drink of Coke I had had in my whole life .

The United States (1952 - Present)

My Entry into the United States

The plane had landed at what is now called Kennedy Airport. The customs official took my passport, looked at it, then smiled at me and said: "You are nice? " I did not quite know how to respond to that question. He repeated his question a few times. Finally he changed it to, "You work in a hospital?", or something like that. I said yes. So he affirmed, "You are a nice." I finally understood. I said yes, I was a nurse . He returned my passport allowing me to proceed to meet my family whom I had not seen in thirteen years and who were waiting for me outside.

No Sky Scrapers ?

After I had collected my duffel bag and gone through customs at what was then called Idlewild Airport and after our first awkward greetings (what do you say to one another after thirteen years of separation ?) my father got a cab for the five of us (my aunt had also come to welcome me to the United States). I was looking forward to seeing the sights of New York which , to me, meant Sky Scrapers . Unfortunately my parents, at whose home I was going to stay until I found a place of my own, lived in Queens where at that time were only one to two story houses or apartment buildings with at most four floors .

What Makes You Think I am Interested in You?

I was working during the evening shift . The Resident was sitting in the office ,reading patients' charts .He was bright and at the same time gentle and kind with the patients . I appreciated what he had to say during case conferences. We had hardly ever spoken to one another , but I liked him and wanted to get to know him better , wanted to know what he thought about this and that psychiatric theory . So I gathered up my courage ,approached him and asked him whether he would be willing to have dinner with me . He looked at me startled and rather shocked .(True , I was probably a little older than he , in my early thirties). " Did I give you any indication that I am interested in you ?" he asked coldly and turned away from me.

The Encyclopedia Britannica

It was early evening. I was relaxing in my third avenue apartment after a hard day of work when the intercom bell rang. A man answered my query as to who it was, saying that he absolutely had to come up, it was of crucial importance. And so I let him in.

He told me he was selling Encyclopedias door to door and there was no other way to buy them. He told me also that this was my one and only opportunity to purchase one. If I refused I would never be able to buy another Encyclopedia for as long as I lived.

I obviously could not afford to take that chance , especially since I love to have access to reference works in my own home. And the Encyclopedia Britannica no less!

And so I signed up for it, even though I had to borrow money from my father to pay the bill.

These Are the United States

I was working night shift on the psychiatric unit of a general hospital. As I was making my periodic rounds I found the non professional staff resting rather than doing their assignments. I reprimanded them for it and asked them to get going . An older woman who had worked on that unit for many years said she would report me for pulling rank; after all she was the aide in charge .

The next day I was called and asked to make an appointment with the director of nursing. When I came in she told me in no uncertain terms that this was the United States and not Germany and that here "we do not give orders and push our staff . They know what they are supposed to be doing. " I left her office without saying a word.

The Bed Bath.

I offered to do the dishes after my sister and her fourth husband had given my parents and me a sumptuous dinner . Slowly and systematically I worked my way through the many plates and pots and pans. It reminded me of the summer in Damascus when I worked as an au pair with a family who entertained a great deal . With each load of dishes she brought out my sister who was highly efficient became more and more irritated with me. "You don't have to give them a bed bath, you know " she exclaimed finally.

Why Don't You Write Your Own Book?

We were discussing some of the psychiatric nursing literature in our seminar during my Masters' studies in psychiatric nursing education. As I recall ,nobody in the class said very much . I voiced some critical remarks about the writer's style and the overall content of the material. The teacher , who was also in charge of the whole program , became increasingly irritated with me and my comments. " You always have something negative to say ". she exploded finally. "Why don't you write your own book ?" I did . And, when it was published , sent her a copy with my thanks.

No College Job

After I received my Master's degree I wanted very much to find a teaching position at one of the colleges in the area . I was able to secure interviews at various programs , but the answer was always the same paradoxical one: "We cannot offer you a college position unless you have had experience in college teaching first !"

The Tetons

My "twin"(who was born in the United States on the same day as I was born in Europe) and I took a cross country trip to the Tetons. We arrived after many nights of driving . It had been too hot to drive in day time in his un air - conditioned old Mercury , in spite of the water bag in front of the hood. I could barely sleep that night , rearing to climb those mountains that reminded me so much of the Austrian Alps.

At my insistence we got to the foot of the trail at the crack of dawn and climbed and climbed and climbed . It was well after midday and we still were not anywhere near the top. My twin wanted us to return , fearful that we might get stuck on the trail in the dark without protection from animals and elements. But I would not hear of it. I was "high" from the air and the beauty of the scenery . Finally we made it to the saddle between the two "tetons" and I could look down into Idaho from where I stood. I sat down, filled with bliss and totally exhausted and wanting to rest and rest and rest , take in the scenery and spend the night where we were.

He insisted that we return right then and gave me a shot of the brandy he carried with him in a flask . Slowly, slowly we started on our descent. He led the way and I leaned on him , occasionally crying hysterically that I could not and would not take one more step. Each time he gave me another shot of his brandy and pulled me along with him on the narrow trail while it became darker and darker around us. By the time we reached the road it was night and I was drunk . Fortunately some passers by gave us a lift to our car .

She is Teaching my Class

I was teaching at a mental hospital in New Jersey when the most famous psychiatric nurse in the whole world offered me the charge position in the undergraduate psychiatric nursing division at her college. Of course I jumped at the opportunity.

But, low and behold, when it came to my teaching the clinical and theory courses to which I was assigned, she was there and took over each class while I sat by, cringing silently.

My Welcoming Committee

For some time , while I was teaching at Rutgers, I lived in a first floor garden apartment. I left the window open so that my two cats could come and go as they wished while I was at work. And every evening when I came home, as soon as I parked the car, they spilled out of the window to welcome me.

The Man Who Wanted to Kill Himself

I was living in Greenwich Village at that time . Early one evening as I went out to get something from a nearby store I ran into a tall young man (or maybe he ran into me) who cried out loudly that he was going to kill himself. I asked him what was the matter. He just repeated what he had said , but added that it would be that particular night. I looked frantically for a policeman and asked passers by to call for the police. Everyone ignored me . I told the young man that I would call 911 from a pay phone to get some help for him. He replied that if I did that he would run away and definitely kill himself. I said that I myself was willing to go to the hospital with him if he would come with me , since he obviously was not well. . He said that he was willing to go with me the next morning but not that night. What was I to do with this tall young man in the middle of the sidewalk whose life seemed to lie in my hands?

So I offered him that he stay with me that night under condition that he behave himself and that the next morning he and I would go the emergency room at the hospital nearby. He refused to sleep on the couch in the adjoining room and tried to make advances to me which I was able to fend off. It was a long, restless night.

The next morning we went to the hospital. The psychiatrist at the emergency room examined him and sent him home. I sent a long letter of complaint to the hospital's medical director which he refuted stating that they knew their job.

The trail in Vermont

I was hiking alone , following a trail that was ultimately going to take me back to the campground from where I had started. Unfortunately this was not what happened. I kept walking and walking and at some point came to a crossing of several trails. Which one was I to follow? I tried to orient myself with the help of my map and compass and the location of the sun in the sky . It was 1 PM. The sun was supposed to be South . I needed to take the trail that was going West , more or less like the sun. . That was easy enough , I thought. I kept walking and walking. and encountered no one on the way . After a long time of walking I found myself back at that same crossing ; only the sun had moved quite a bit down in the sky and much farther away from where I stood. Before leaving I had signed in at the camp and told them what my plans were . Would they send a search party for me ? What if it became dark before they thought of it? What if I had to spend the night alone there among foxes and wolves? As I continued to walk without having any idea where I was going I found myself by a river . It looked as if the trail continued on the other side of it. I could either go back or cross over and hope for the best on the other side. Holding my backpack in one hand and my shoes with my watch in them in the other I waded through the water , stepping from one stone to the next . Miraculously , as I followed the trail downhill I found myself at the camp in no time at all . It was dusk by then . I signed in at their registration desk and realized that they had not as yet noticed my absence .

Petrovitch's Death

The Vet said that there was nothing he could do to save my cat . He said I should take Petrovitch home and let him die in peace. I had boarded my other cat, Pixie, with my parents, disregarding their discomfort and fear that he might infect their cats. I settled down on the couch next to Petrovitch and kept watch over him. He was half asleep and his breath was shallow. He did not seem to suffer. We were both silent and there was silence around us. I became aware of a deep pain arising from within me. It was the ancient, all encompassing agony of the mother who is losing her child .

My Father and My First Book

My first book on nurse patient relationships had just been published. I had dedicated it to my parents (not specifying whether that meant my stepmother or my mother) and gave a copy of it to my father . A few weeks later when I went to visit him I asked him what he thought of it . He said he never opened it since he would not understand it anyway .

Don't Be So Childish

I always felt reluctant to call my sister : I did not know what to say when she answered the phone and I did not know what to think when she did not. Once , it was the day after she had invited us all for Thanksgiving dinner during which I could feel her deep depression behind her silence and sullen demeanor. I called her to thank her for the dinner . to check on how she was feeling and , last .but not least, to make sure she was still alive since she mentioned suicide frequently.

Her response was one of utter fury (and reminiscent of my mother's exclamation many years ago) : "You don't give a damn about me! All you want to know is whether I have already killed myself or not !" She hung up without giving me a chance to respond. I tried to call her back but she did not pick up .

I was devastated and called my father , crying , to tell him what had occurred ; something I had never done before in my life of forty plus years . He barely let me finish and told me in no uncertain terms to stop being so childish .

She Does Not Want to Talk to You

After my sister's next to last attempt at taking her own life I called the hospital where she had been placed in a closed unit. I told them I was her sister and asked when their visiting hours were ,so I could go and see her . I was told that I was not allowed to visit nor would they give me information about her condition over the phone. I did not understand and called her (fourth) husband . He told me that her current state was entirely my fault and that she did not wish to talk to me. With that he hung up the phone without giving me a chance to reply.

The Blind Date .

At one of my visits with my father at his store I told him about the conductor at a concert which I had recently attended. I was enthralled by his musicianship . He reminded me of Bruno Walter whose feel for melody, tempo and rhythm was unmatched ,as far as I was concerned, by any other . I said something about how I would love to tell him how much I appreciated his work .

It turned out that this conductor happened to be a regular customer at my father's store. It also turned out that when I returned with our habitual two cups of coffee and doughnuts that my father had told the conductor about my wish to express my appreciation in person. Apparently the conductor told my father that he would be delighted to have dinner with me. He would pick me up at my father's store at 7 PM the following evening. I was rather shocked: Although I idolized his musicianship, I had no knowledge of the man himself and had no idea what, after one or two admiring sentences on my part, he and I would talk about for the rest of the evening.

I did not have to worry . When I arrived at the store about 15 minutes prior to the appointment , my father informed me that the conductor had just called him and told him he was not feeling well and regretfully had to cancel our date.

At the Pool , or was it the Beach?

I don't remember whether it was by a pool or at the beach. We were both graduate students . I was working on my doctorate and she on her Masters . We wanted to take a day off. Were other classmates with us? I don't remember that either . What I do remember is her sitting there, oblivious to me and/ or our classmates, in her black bathing suit , hugging her legs , lost in thought or feeling, and, experiencing or not ,I did not know, bottomless pain.

I knew at that moment that we were destined for one another . That was thirty five years ago . We are still together , through thick and thin.

Not a Solid Surface ?

One of the required courses at the doctoral program dealt with concepts and new understandings in the physical sciences. It was a very large class. The professor explained to us that our perception of a table having a solid surface was wrong . Instead there was nothing but an assembly of innumerable atoms that were swirling around in constant motion. I raised my hand : "If that were so, how come my cats dare to jump on top of it ? " All the heads turned to look at me , but no one said a word.

Do You Want to Work on It ?

I complained to my analyst about my overeating. "Do you want to work on it ?" he asked me . I did not answer him and never mentioned the topic again.

Bagels

One day when I picked up my father to go out with him for a bite to eat I had a yen for a cinnamon raisin bagel with cream cheese and lox. I asked him whether he knew of a bagel place in his area where we could go for our lunch . He acted shocked : " What ? No daughter of mine eats bagels ! "

A Heaven Filled with Stars

We had been visiting a friend at the East End of Long Island. When we were leaving it was already dark , but the wide open sky was lit up with innumerable stars . It was so beautiful and powerful that I could not tolerate its impact on me and I had to close my eyes.

Coming Home in the Snow

I had taught an early evening class in Long Island and was driving back to Manhattan. It was a very dark, windy, snowy and bitter cold night. The wind had packed the snow against the street signs so that they became illegible. I was trying to find the street that would lead me toward the bridge to Manhattan, but instead found myself at La Guardia Airport. I tried to find the exit, thought I had found it, drove on and, lo and behold, after a while found myself again at La Guardia. It happened a third time before I finally, around midnight, found my way home. Not a single gas station had been open where I could have asked for help.

A Job Interview

I was a full time doctoral student on a government scholarship, when the chairperson of the program asked me whether I'd be willing to do her a favor and go through the motion of an interview for a position as director of a graduate program in psychiatric nursing at a Long Island university. She was convinced that it would not work out , but this gesture on her part would prove her good will to the Dean there while I could remain to be a full time student .

To her chagrin it turned out, however, that the Dean and I hit it off , that I liked the program, the faculty of the school and of the university and the overall location and ,although it slowed down my doctoral work, I remained there for the next fourteen years .

Hiking in the Sierras

I told my friends about the solitary hike I had undertaken in the Sierra Nevada during a summer vacation when I visited family and friends in California. I told them that the trail was pretty steep , but I managed by stopping at frequent intervals , maybe every 20 or 30 minutes or so , to rest and eat a sandwich and then continued along my hike . They looked at me aghast : "What , you were hiking all day and ate a sandwich every 20 minutes ? How did your stomach manage that ?"

The Kristine Mann Library.

Upon my analyst's suggestion I applied to and was accepted into the Analytical Psychology Club. One of the privileges of being a member was to be given a key to the Kristine Mann Library which at that time was located on the second (or third?) floor of a midtown hotel in New York.

I remember the first time I entered the premises of the Club library : I was the only one there , surrounded by bookcases that filled the rooms . It seems that there were no windows , or else they were covered by heavy curtains. In any case there was absolute silence; none of the street noises penetrated this inner sanctum of Jungian Lore.

I felt as if I had been given permission to enter a sacred space , a holy of holies which , by virtue of my possessing a key, was also mine. As a result I felt as if after decades of difficult work on myself I had finally become one of the Chosen ones.

The Garbage Strike

On the day my oral thesis defense was scheduled there was also a strike by the city garbage personnel. I could barely enter the building, for the sidewalk was overloaded with bags of all sizes, colors and smells.

As I recall, the elevator operators were not working either and I had to climb several flights of stairs to meet with the committee that would examine me. As I was waiting in the hall to be invited in by them, I did my best not to read any meaning into those various coinciding events.

Why Not Become a Jungian Analyst?

I asked my analyst what he thought of my training to become a family therapist . He considered this for a minute and then replied : "Why not become a Jungian analyst instead ?"

I was dumbfounded and thrilled at the same time. After having been rejected by the Reichian group several years before that , it had not occurred to me that the Jungians who had so much more expectations of psychological maturity would consider me as an applicant.

Admission Interview at Training Institute

It was a hot day . I was considerably overweight and so I wore a loose , sleeveless flowery dress and no stockings , never giving a thought about what might be appropriate attire for that occasion. Nor had I thought much about what might be asked of me during that interview. All I did think about was that I wanted to be there on time. The only parking space I could find was at a considerable distance from the interview place , so I had to walk quite a bit in the heat .

I arrived early at the faculty member's office where we were to meet . A woman faculty member who was to be on my committee was already sitting in the waiting room. I had heard her lecture and had read some of her writings but did not want to say anything about it for fear she would think I was trying to ingratiate myself with her . She smiled at me but did not say anything either . And so we sat for quite a while in a rather awkward silence .

Finally we were allowed in . The committee members asked me why I wanted to train at the Jung Institute. . I said, truthfully , as I thought I was expected to be with psychoanalysts , that I really did not want to go through the training , but something in me said that this was what I had to do at that time . Hence I was applying for admission to the program. They did not seem to like what I had to say , but took me on provisionally with certain conditions attached.

Beethoven's Walk

After a long absence I returned to Vienna and visited some of the sights I had always wanted to see. One of them was Beethoven's house in the suburbs and the walk he took from there while he was ruminating and composing. I found both. As I was following the trail I could see him before me : bent forward ,hands crossed behind his back , scowling and humming as he walked , completely oblivious to his environment . I could feel the enormous energies inside of him pushing against each other : the torture of his personal pain as well the pain of giving birth to the music that wanted to come forth .

Nothing Original

I showed my analyst the paper I had written on magical consciousness and borderline conditions . I thought it was rather good and I was looking forward to her praise. She returned it to me with somewhat of a smirk which implied that she had read better papers in her time . And she said that she could not find anything original in it.

My Supervisor's Penis

I had heard him lecture and I liked everything about him : The subject matter he had chosen for his lecture, the clarity and conciseness of his presentation and the kindness that permeated his entire being. And so I approached him after his talk and asked him whether he would be willing to be my supervisor. He agreed.

Our work went pretty well. In his quiet and kindly manner he made many valuable criticisms and suggestions . I felt I could trust him implicitly . Therefore I believed that I could share my thoughts and fantasies with him , as phenomena in their own right. And so I told him about my fantasies about his very long and powerful penis. He did not say anything and I could see he was frozen in discomfort . That was a learning experience for me : even with psychoanalysts one must never lose all reserve.

Banal Dreams

After looking over the dreams I had copied for her , my analyst shook her head in disapproval : "Your dreams are so banal " she said. I felt deeply disturbed : given that I produced such banal dreams I would never be a true Jungian .

I Don't Need You For My Strength

My analyst complained that I spoke to her only about my life problems and my unhappiness ; there must be areas of my life in which I felt happy and successful. I agreed with her that there definitely were such areas , but in those I could manage perfectly on my own and neither needed nor wanted her advice.

The Hotel in London

After a long flight we arrived late in the evening at the hotel in which our travel agent had made reservations for us, only to find out that they had no vacancies and no one else had any either at that time of day. I was furious. What were we supposed to do now? Then I overheard the men at the reception desk speak Arabic to one another. I chimed in with what little I could remember of their language. And, lo and behold, they did find a room for us, a large closet rather, with no bathroom facilities, but better than nothing in that rainy, dark night far away from home.

Dr. von Franz

During a visit to the United States she gave a lecture in a big hall in New York . I don't remember the topic of her talk. I do remember, though, the scholarliness and clarity of her presentation combined with her humility.

. I stood in line with most members of the large audience so that , when it became my turn , I could shake her hand and, without actually saying the words, thank her for the opportunity to experience being with her in the same space.

My Graduation from the C.G. Jung Institute

After many more than the required minimum of six years of study I had finally completed my Thesis and "defended " it before a benevolent committee. At the last candidate faculty meeting of the year those of us who had completed the training were given our certificates and asked to say a few words , as briefly as possible. When it was my turn I said I would be very brief : all I had to say was that from now on I would never ever have to go to school again!

Everybody laughed.

The Crabgrass

The friend at whose house in Israel I had lived for several years came to the US for a visit. Although we had corresponded by mail we had not seen each other for over twenty years., ever since she had said good bye to me at the airport near Tel Aviv.

I picked her up at the train station and drove her to the house my American friend and I own together . She looked around , nodded to herself and asked : "Why don't you get rid of the crabgrass?"

Don't Analyze Me .

After my grandfather's death at 104 his (third) wife came to the United States from Argentina to visit friends and relatives in the West. She had not planned to visit me at my home in Long Island but wanted to meet with me during her stop over at Kennedy airport . Although I had a busy workday I did manage to visit with her . After all we had not seen each other in over thirty years . She was in a wheelchair and enjoyed the attention she had received from the airline personnel. I asked her how things were going for her after my grandfather's death and probably some other questions. I guess the focus was primarily on her , partly because she was not particularly interested in my life.

When it was time for her to board her flight she thanked me for psychoanalyzing her .

The Music in my Father's Ears

My father who had become almost completely deaf during the preceding few years complained to me that he was hearing loud melodies inside his head and was unable to get rid of them . Did I know what caused this phenomenon ? I told him I did not know the cause . He said, only half jokingly: "Is that what I sent you to school for ?" (He did not send me to school : the government and I paid for my education.)

Lately I too hear melodies that accompany me through my tasks all day and I am beginning to appreciate what it may have been like for him .

My Father's Paranoia

Not too long before his death I picked up my father for lunch . He seemed unhappy and distraught. I knew he was not pleased with his marriage , but was there something else? After we had ordered our meal I asked him about his mood .

He told me he was greatly disturbed : my stepmother was having an affair. I could not believe my ears . As far as I knew she was bedridden most of the time and did not leave her home except for visits to her doctors. I tried to convince him of the impossibility of his assumption , but he stuck to it tenaciously . I felt for him but there was nothing I could do .

My Father's Death .

It was a rainy , dark Fall evening . I had driven home after a very long day at work . I was exhausted . Around 9 PM there was a phone call from my stepmother that my father had had severe pain in the stomach (heart ?) region and that ,if I wanted to see him alive, I should come and visit him now.

I could not conceive of driving all the way back to Queens from Long Island in the darkness and the rain, given how totally exhausted I was. . Also, I was afraid that my father would become suspicious and frightened if I came at that unusual hour to visit him. He was terrified of dying and I did not want to add to his fear . Instead I asked to speak with him on the phone. He sounded reassuring. He said he was feeling much better , had had something warm to drink and was going to sleep now. I wished him a good night and said I would drop by the next day .

Early the next morning my stepmother called to tell me that he had died , peacefully ,in his sleep. I did go then. It was still raining very hard and it was very hot. And it was a holiday , It was very difficult , even with police help , to summon a doctor and to get someone from a funeral parlor to come and take him away . While we were waiting for hours in the hot apartment in uncomfortable silence , my father lay on his bed , smiling in his everlasting sleep. He, like my mother , never knew that he was going to die.

Snorkeling

We were vacationing on a Caribbean island . I had never tried snorkeling and was eager to get a closer look at the tropical flora and fauna in the clear and quiet sea. . And so we arranged to have a guide take us out in small boat and to help us to descend into the deep. I had been somewhat afraid of not getting sufficient air when I would immerse myself into the water . But that did not turn out to be my problem . What happened was that under the guise of trying to help me he touched me at a place where he had no business to be and given that I was under the water , dependent on the air provided me through his help , I did not fight him , just tried to come back up to the surface as fast as I could without getting the bends. I did not say a word. We waited for my friend who enjoyed herself under the water and then I asked that we return to the shore. I was shaken but never complained about him for fear of either not being believed or becoming the laughing stock of his colleagues and friends.

I'm on the Phone

I was sitting at the bank officer's desk in order to discuss with him the opening of another account. Every time I started to tell him what I had in mind his telephone rang and each time he talked at length with the party at the other end of the line. I became increasingly impatient and tried to remind him of what I thought was a fact that as his face to face customer I had priority over incoming calls. Not so. He reprimanded me in no uncertain terms : "Can't you see I am on the phone ?"

I got up , left and changed banks.

Jeffrey

My friend's poodle, Jeffrey, liked to spend the night on my bed . I used to enjoy having him sleep by my feet , but lately his heart condition had worsened and he was breathing noisily much of the time . This deprived me of much needed sleep . Given the long days ahead of me . I finally decided to close my door on him, only to find him the next morning in front of it and delighted to see me after what was apparently a long vigil . I felt very badly .

I felt even worse the next afternoon , when while for a reason I cannot remember , I was working with a client in our living room , my friend walked Jeffrey to the door and simply said : " The time has come ." I felt I had to stay with my work and did not respond , except nodding a brief "so long."

I don't know how I managed to bring the session to its normal closing. I certainly do not remember much of what was said. My not having been able to say good bye to him added to my pain and guilt. I hope that some day I can be as forgiving toward what I did as he was .

My Stepmother's Death

About three and a half years after my father's death I received a phone call early in the morning from my stepmother's night aide. She said that my stepmother had woken up late at night and urgently requested something to eat, something she had never done before. Then she went back to sleep and shortly thereafter she had stopped breathing.

The aide had summoned the doctor and my stepmother's executor and funeral arrangements were under way. Her death did not come as a surprise to me. She had been ailing for a long time. I was speculating, though, about her urgent need and that of my father and of my mother to take in nourishment just prior to their deaths. It was as if something inside them needed to prepare them for the journey ahead.

The Canadian Rockies

We took a trail that gave us a view of the Canadian Rockies at the end of a relatively narrow plain. The colors were stunning: yellow, brown, some red and blue, reminiscent to some extent of the colors in the Middle East. In addition, though, there was a sense of eons of time that had gone into the creation of these mountains. While I stood opposite them at that moment I felt permeated by their quiet, steadfast majesty which measured time in terms of the ice ages which had come and gone. And I felt the calm and steadfastness of the mountain support me in my flimsy temporality.

My Aunt and her Clocks

One day when I visited my aunt I found that the faces of all her clocks were turned toward the wall . I asked her about it . She said she could not read them and there was badness coming out of them .

The next time I saw her I brought her a digital clock. She shook her head and turned it away as well .

It's Nothing !

- Every few weeks I visited my "Doctor " aunt who lived not far from my apartment . She had been very supportive of me during my childhood and she was my role model for many years : an intelligent and intellectual woman who had a doctorate , something very rare during that period. .

When I rang the bell on that particular afternoon and she opened the door , the apartment was practically invisible because of the thick , black smoke that covered everything. I ran into the kitchen , turned off the burner and opened the windows throughout the apartment . The smoke lifted within a minute or so. Thank God it was not an actual fire - only something burning on the stove ! It was only when I realized that neither she nor the apartment had suffered any harm I allowed my hysteria to get the upper hand and started to scream at her : "What are you trying to do? Do you want to set your house on fire? You are not only endangering yourself but everyone around you !" And so on. I called my aunt's daughter right then and there to tell her what had transpired and to impress on her how fortunate it was that I had happened to come by at that time .

My aunt shook her head at me : "What is all your fuss about? It is nothing! Nothing at all !"

The Cat in Aruba

We were walking on the beach during a vacation in Aruba . Suddenly we saw a black kitten running along the sand , crying. It was mid day; the sun was hot . There was no shade anywhere . And there was no mother cat and no human being around who might claim ownership for this desperate little creature.

We wondered who would do such a thing . What would have happened if we had not come along ? Was there no limit to heartless cruelty ? We picked up the kitten , drove back to town , gave it some water , milk and food . But then what ? We asked about a Humane Society and or a veterinarian but got nowhere. We could not keep the kitten in our room, nor could we take it home with us . Then we saw the solution: in the yard behind the kitchen of our hotel there were several cats vying for the left over scraps of food that were thrown out to them periodically. We dropped the kitten off and low and behold he immediately mixed in with the other ones and started to claim his share .

Thank You .

I wanted to be hospitable and generous and even helpful. So I offered my friend's sister the use of my apartment during her stay in this area. She said : "Thank you !" I bought some extra food and some pots and pans for her since I don't cook for myself . When I returned I found out from the doorman that no one had been on my premises. I was annoyed . I had even made arrangements for an extra few days on the Island so as to give her a longer stay in my place. So I called her and asked her what happened. She was defensive. Did she not have the right to spend the few days she had up North with her former friends and neighbours? I was dumbfounded and hung up. Only weeks later did I understand the difference between what she meant by "thank you " and what I inferred from it.

You Should be Happy

We met periodically for lunch . Unfortunately she did not think much of the diners I liked because of their spaciousness. And unfortunately I did not like to sit in the more elegant but noisy and cramped restaurants she preferred. I gave in , however, and we met ,once again, in her type of restaurant . Given the loud talking all around me in the densely packed restaurant I must have looked particularly uptight and not very happy.

She was annoyed." Are you not happy?" she asked me. "Not particularly", I said , implying : at this particular moment . "What kind of a life are you leading that does not make you happy?" she asked. "I said: " Some things make me happy; others are just drudgery . But then that's all part of life". "Are you not happy to see me ?", she asked . I shrugged. I might have been happier in a different environment. . Besides, and I did not say that , given that most of my day is spent in the company of people, meeting with old acquaintances and friends is often more of an obligation than a pleasure for me . "Well, if you are not happy seeing me ," she answered , there is no point in our having lunch together . And with that she asked for her bill , turned her back to me and started to walk out.

The Synagogue in Newport

On our way back from a brief vacation in Cape Cod we stopped in Newport, Rhode Island, to look around a bit. I had a yearning to see the synagogue which was built shortly after the Declaration of Independence. I was impressed by the spaciousness and beauty of the building . And I was deeply moved by the plaque which spelled out the right of all US citizens to practice their religious beliefs . Even though I had lived many years in the United States ,for the first time in my life I did not only understand but experienced in the depth of my being the implications of these words : that I was welcome in this country and unconditionally accepted for who I was.

The Cat Who Cried .

Before we finally closed off the access to our basement windows feral cats would occasionally raise their litters there . We were successful in having the first cat, Mother Cat , as we called her, spayed several weeks after she had had her litter. As soon as she returned from her sojourn of several days at the Vet's she called out for her babies . She lived with us in our garage for a long time with her son, Nicki., and then ,in addition, with a new arrival named Grey until she died a few weeks after having suffered a stroke. Although she never became sociable with humans she seemed glad to have food and a roof over her head.

But there was another cat , many years later, who kept her kittens in the basement window but did not take care of them . In fact, we noticed first the approximately six week old kittens who were crying and frantically trying to get out or at least get food. The mother visited them occasionally but was mostly gallivanting through the yards. After attempting , unsuccessfully, to feed the kittens ourselves and worried that they might starve , we were able to get them adopted. Apparently the mother had not expected that she would not find them on one of her rare visits. Suddenly, it was a pitch dark night , we heard her screaming and wailing , as if Demeter herself had entered into her after Persephone's abduction. We looked for her in the hope we would be able to reassure and console her , but we could not locate her in person ,only her disembodied cries . The high pitched wailing went on for three consecutive nights for hours on end . After that we never saw her or heard her again.

My Colleague's Insulin Shock

Several of us shared an office suite. I was working on a Friday afternoon and so was one of my colleagues. Nothing unusual about that . But there was something unusual about the way he behaved : his office door was open and he was sitting there ,staring into space , while someone was waiting for him in the waiting room. I greeted him and alerted him to the presence of his client. He smiled at me and did not budge . It did not make sense . I passed by his door again and asked him whether he had heard me. He seemed even more removed from reality . This was totally unusual for the kind of friendly and outgoing person he was.

Then I remembered : He was a diabetic ! I raced downstairs , grabbed the pharmacist whom I knew well by the arm (I did not know any of the internists in the building and was afraid their staff would not let me through to them) .I told him to bring some chocolate (neither of us had orange juice at our disposal) and come upstairs with me right now and then . At first he did not know what I was after , but the moment I mentioned my colleague's name he understood, We ran upstairs and fed him the chocolate . He was almost unconscious and barely able to swallow it. It did the trick though and he came to shortly thereafter . I shuddered when I thought of what might have happened if I had not been there or if his door had been closed.

The Train that Disappeared.

It was late afternoon and I was at the train station waiting for my usual train to New York City . It was announced that my train would be late. According to its whereabouts it was still about 20 minutes away . I was somewhat annoyed : it was raining and it was getting dark . A few minutes later the train was still announced to be at the same spot. But then it began to move . One by one the other stations , closer to mine were announced until the train was two stations away from mine. They kept announcing the train's location at that same station .. And then, low and behold .they announced the approach and still distant whereabouts of the next train which was due half an hour after mine. What had happened to my train ?

I boarded the second train when it arrived, reasonably on time . I asked the people on it and I asked the conductor what had happened to the previous train. Nobody knew . It felt eerie . Could a whole train disappear from the face of the earth ?

My Beeper

Whenever my friend does not follow through on what she says she will do for me I swear to myself that I shall not make any further requests of her on my behalf. I tell myself that I shall do everything on my own and if I cannot manage ,time- or otherwise , it can not be helped.

Almost invariably, however , in the wake of that decision I find myself having forgotten something vital, such as my beeper or my house - or car keys which necessitates my once again enlisting her aid..

"You Are Not the Only One

After he had finished painting the outside of our house I thanked the painter for having done such a good job and for having tidied up after himself the way he had done. He faced me rather angrily : "Do you think you are the only one?" I did not know how to answer his question.

You Lose Some, You Win Some.

It was evening and raining in New York City. I was hungry and wanted to stop for something to eat before going to my apartment . I did want to call home, though, to say I had arrived. I tried a public phone at the corner . The call did not go through and my coins were not returned . I complained , which entailed a lengthy question and answer period. I ordered something at the next handy restaurant and tried to make another call while waiting for my meal to be served. Again no connection and again no return of my coins. I complained again and the operator said she would see whether she could fix it right away. And ,indeed , my coins came down. But it did not stop there . The phone let loose an avalanche of quarters , on and on . I could not contain them in my hands . They spilled on the floor and still came coming down. I tried to call the operator again ,but could not get through. So, I figured ,God gave them to me , to spread among the poor.

Mices

The lady who has been cleaning for us for many , many years has been most honest, reliable and cooperative throughout those years . But there is one thing she will not do for us and that is cleaning the garage. "Why not ? " she was asked . "Because there are mices " was the answer . And that was that.

You Are Older Than I

The other day when the cleaner, an older , frail man from Korea , had to look up in his computer manual how to make copies of his bills I lost my temper . I had been chafing at the bit while he examined slowly and painstakingly each piece I had brought in for dry cleaning for make , directions for handling and stains . I even held my tongue when he reexamined each piece as he entered it into his computer . But when he started to study his manual I "lost it " , as they say . He seemed intimidated and repeated several times : "No Plobrem!", when I perfunctorily apologized for my outburst , which had consisted in letting him know that I did not have "that kind of time ".

I felt badly about my lack of control and kept thinking about it for the next few days . Finally, several days before the next scheduled pickup I decided to go in and to apologize in a more heartfelt way , to let him know that I really appreciated his workmanship and to assure him that we would find a way to work things out together . He greeted me warmly and assured me that he understood and that there was absolutely no problem. After all ,I was much older than he . We shook hands warmly and I left .

"Promptly"

I received a note from my doctor confirming our next appointment . In the note it said that if for any reason I could not make the appointment I should notify the office *promptly*.

We Don't Do Fingers

Not too long ago I experienced a lot of pain in the little finger of my right hand . I had trouble bending it or putting any kind of pressure on it and was wondering whether there might be a fracture even though I could not remember having injured it in any way . In any case I thought an X - ray might be advisable and so I called my doctor's office , knowing that they did chest X- rays as part of their annual check ups. But when I called the answer was , unfortunately, : "We don't do fingers."

The Shoemaker's Children

My new psychotherapist laughed and said: "You know, you two psychotherapy professionals remind me of the shoemaker's children." "How so?" I asked. "They had to go barefoot."

A light went on in my head: Years of study and personal psychotherapy had focused on the implications of interpersonal issues for my inner life but never dealt with them as such. Well, perhaps it was time to focus on my inferior extraverted feeling and really work on it prior to my demise from this earth.

How to Get Organized

Two classes , one week apart, on how to get organized were offered at the Y. We took an early train to the city to make sure we were there on time. A few people had arrived ahead of us and a few more came in later . We all sat on our respective seats waiting for the instructor.

When it was 15 minutes after the class was due to begin there was some discussion among us about what to do: Should we wait some more? Or should we just go home? I decided (and told them) that I would go downstairs and try to find out what was going on from a member of the administration. The building guard said he would send someone up . A man in uniform came but said he knew nothing about our class.

About half hour after starting time we all left the classroom and demanded a refund from the box office(which we received.) I remonstrated with the guard , reminding him that he said he would contact administration and they would let us know what was going on. He replied angrily that he never said such a thing, since there was no one from the administration present in the first place.!

We Want to Help You

I felt the need and urgency to return to my city apartment even though I was suffering from a sudden severe pain all along my right leg . I could barely put weight on it. When I arrived at Penn Station , not knowing where the elevator was , I decided to drag my luggage along with myself up the stairs . Gritting my teeth I made my slow ascent. Suddenly I felt someone snatching my bags away and someone else pushing me from behind. Though numbed by the pain ,I did feel frightened: what if they trampled over me and took off with my totes which among other things contained my week's earnings?

But then I heard the voice of a young woman, the one who was gently pushing me upstairs from behind: " Don't be afraid ! We are only trying to help you !"

When we reached the top of the stairs the young man who was with her returned my bags to me , clasped the woman's hand and they both trotted away . I did not have a chance to thank them .

The Little Old Lady

Since car traffic moves very slowly during the rush hour I prefer to take the subway on the mornings when I teach in midtown. I often have to stand in very crowded trains and hold on wherever possible as best as I can.

Once someone asked a woman to move forward a bit so he could get through the door. She said she could not do that, because otherwise she would have to push that little old lady standing in front of her. That "little old lady" was I.

The Lecture

I wanted to attend the lecture because its content really interested me . On the other hand I was a bit uncomfortable about going to that area in the city alone at night. I asked a colleague whether he might be interested in joining me, but he was otherwise engaged.

My interest was strong enough that I decided to take a cab and to get there in plenty of time before it was totally dark outside. When I told him the address, the first thing the cabby asked was near what avenue 2 East 103 street was. I told him. But then it turned out , which neither he nor I had anticipated that 103rd street is not open to vehicular traffic for several blocks.

The cabby voiced his regrets and I got out of the car and walked. It had become quite dark and I had to walk for several blocks on paths that connected several building projects with one another. At one point 103rd street disappeared altogether and resumed its existence quite a bit to the left from where it had been before. I walked briskly and purposefully, clutching my pocket book and looking neither left nor right. Although there were quite a few people of all ages and races around, no one paid any attention to me.

At last I arrived at the building where the lecture was to be held. I was early and so I studied the bulletin boards in the front hall that listed the many events for that evening. and the rooms in which they were being held. Eventually I found the listing of my lecture; only its starting time had been 7 PM instead of 8 as I had understood it to be. I could not believe my eyes and asked the elevator operator who confirmed that the lecture had started quite a while ago.

I turned around , got another cab and headed for home.

Old Women Are Invisible

When I go to stores nowadays I am often ignored by the sales people while customers arriving after me are being served. And on the train to or from New York the conductor frequently walks by me without collecting the fee.

At the stores where I am ignored I smile pleasantly at the personnel and say that I am going to look elsewhere for what I need , and thank them "just the same ". On the train I simply mind my business and, when I get off, calculate with pleasure the money I have saved during the past weeks.

Just Like my Grandmother

I was buying a newspaper at the neighborhood store. A young man standing next to me asked with a strident voice : "How you doin?" Not realizing that the question was directed at me , I did not answer.

He repeated his question, louder and in an even more strident tone. I told him I had been doing fine until my ears got hurt by his voice. He laughed loudly and hollered: "You sound just like my grandmother ! That's just what my grandmother always says! Just like my grandmother !" And with this he walked off, zigzagging across the pavement, repeating his laughter and his litany until he reached the bar next door.

The Cemetery Near my Home

Whenever I have errands to the North of my home and on my return trip I drive past the cemetery where we have bought graves for ourselves. My grave is waiting for me , while I am still driving around. I smile to myself as I contemplate this simultaneity of both my present existence and its end .

